



## PRESS RELEASE

### Folklife Festival Highlights State's Diverse Communities



Photo: East Indian Odissi dance was a favorite performance of the 2001 Kentucky Folklife Festival. (Photo by Kentucky Folklife Program/Kentucky Historical Society)

Kentucky boasts a surprising number of communities, cultures and traditions in its 120 counties. The Kentucky Folklife Festival—Sept. 25-27 in historic downtown Frankfort—will highlight four.

The festival's Community Crossroads area on the grounds of the Old State Capitol will feature the state's Latino, East Indian, Appalachian and Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, along with their traditions and customs. Community Crossroads will allow visitors to see the folk groups side-by-side and learn about both their similarities and differences.

Members of the four communities will share elements of their identities, such as dance, music, and storytelling and the artistic expression of everyday life. Demonstrators will present a re-creation of a typical room in a traditional household and provide a chance for visitors to further explore that particular culture's recreation, visual arts, and family traditions.

Latino art forms in the Community Crossroads area will include Central American *alfombras* (sawdust carpets) created by residents of Shelbyville, dominoes as a form of recreation among Cuban communities, and Mexican *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) traditions. There will also be dance demonstrations and instruction in the Salsa, Merengue, and Cha-Cha styles.

Members of Louisville's East Indian community will demonstrate *mehendi* (painting complex patterns on the skin with henna) and *rangoli* (the traditional art of decorating floors with patterns using colored powder), in addition to examples of North and South Indian dances. Again this year, Louisville Hindu Temple yoga club members will guide visitors through a series of yoga poses and movements.

While we most often associate “community” with ethnicity, race, and religion, community is also defined in large part by language and culture. Kentuckians who are deaf or hard of hearing provide a good example of how a community can be created among people with shared language, culture and life experience that is not based on such things as ethnicity. This section of Community Crossroads will spotlight the history of deaf communities and schools in Kentucky. It will feature American Sign Language activities, technological innovations used in deaf households and deaf storytellers and artists.

Members of Letcher County’s Carcassonne Community Center were included in the Smithsonian Institution’s American Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., in 2003. They will also appear at the Kentucky Folklife Festival, demonstrating square dancing, quilting and other aspects of Appalachian life.

Make plans now to visit this year’s Kentucky Folklife Festival, where visitors will explore questions like: What makes a community? What do these groups have in common and what sets them apart? How is my community similar or different? Can one person belong to more than one community?

The festival is a program of the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Arts Council, agencies of Kentucky State Government’s Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and showcases the continuing efforts of the Kentucky Folklife Program to document, conserve, and promote the state’s folk traditions. There is no general admission charge, but there are fees for some festival activities such as boat rides. Donations are accepted and appreciated.

For more information about the Kentucky Folklife Festival, visit the website [folklife.ky.gov](http://folklife.ky.gov) or call, toll free, 1-877-4HISTORY (1-877-444-7867).

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